

The President's Radio Address

May 7, 1994

Good morning. This week we saw a dramatic example of what we can accomplish together when you make your voices heard and Washington sets aside partisan differences to do the people's business.

Even though nearly everyone said it couldn't be done, the House of Representatives voted to make our streets safer by banning the sale of 19 different assault weapons. We pushed hard for this result, and the outcome defied the old enemy of gridlock. Democrats and Republicans alike sent a powerful message that the American people are determined to take their streets, their schools, and their communities back from criminals.

This vote teaches us an important lesson: No matter how uphill a battle may seem, when we set our minds to it, we can deal with the problems facing our country. Last year it took the same kind of commitment to pass a powerful plan to reduce the deficit. And now we're seeing the rewards of that.

Just yesterday, we learned that our economy has created over a quarter of a million jobs in April, and almost a million in the first 4 months of this year alone, about 3 million jobs since we all began this effort and nearly all of them in the private sector.

Our successes in fighting crime and improving the economy are worth thinking about on this Mother's Day weekend. We are honoring the people who are at the heart of our society's most important institution, the family.

Tomorrow, mothers all across America will enjoy the flowers, cards, and breakfasts in bed. But we should remember another gift that will improve and prolong their lives: the gift of good health care. Women are the people most likely to guard their families' health care and to make sure we're all healthier. And yet too often our health care system leaves women behind. Even when treatments are available, women don't get the necessary health care they need because they have inadequate insurance or none at all. More women than men work part-time or in jobs without insurance. And historically, research studies on everything from heart disease to strokes to AIDS have tended to focus on men,

leaving women more vulnerable to many diseases.

I am committed to redressing these inequities. We've made a good start. We've got a fine woman, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala. We created the first senior-level position in Government dedicated to women's health concerns. We've increased funds to prevent and treat diseases that afflict women. Right now, the largest clinical trial in the United States' history is underway, looking at how to prevent heart disease, the biggest killer of our women. We launched a national action plan on breast cancer to fight the killer of 46,000 women every year. These women are not just numbers, they are loved ones lost forever. And most important, we're pushing to reform the health care system.

The great majority of the letters Hillary and I have received about health care reform have been from women, voicing concerns for their families, their children, and their parents. One was from a New York woman forced to take a job with no medical coverage. Last year, a lump was found in her breast, and her doctors said it should be removed. But her family can't afford the operation. "I don't want to die," she wrote us, "and because of lack of money, I may. I hope that you'll be able to do something soon so that no one will have to go through what I am going through."

This mother is just 44 years old. I can't share her name because she hasn't told her family yet. She doesn't want them to worry. This woman's condition may be treatable, but she won't know because treatment is simply out of her financial reach.

Travesties like this happen too often. Women avoid preventive care because they're afraid of having records of preexisting conditions that will deny them insurance coverage. In a recent survey, 11 percent of women said they didn't get their blood pressure checked; 35 percent didn't receive a Pap smear; and 44 percent didn't receive a mammogram.

Our health care plan emphasizes preventive care. It eliminates preexisting conditions and bans lifetime limits on health coverage. It makes research of women's health problems a priority.

It helps families when a loved one needs long-term care. And it gives coverage to everyone, regardless of whether she is healthy or ill, married or single, working inside or outside the home.

For every American blessed with a mother, or the wonderful memory of one, I ask you to think about the 16 million women in our Nation who don't get the health care services they need. And think about their children. Think how a single illness can destroy a family.

I think of a courageous woman I met this week named Kate Miles, who is caring for a son with multiple disabilities. Her family has no assistance for long-term care. So to keep her son, Robert, out of a nursing home, and because of the awful way our system operates, Kate Miles had to give up her job, and her husband, Tom, must work two jobs. As she so eloquently put it: "In an institution, who will be there in the middle of the night when he's

frightened, to tell him it's all right and that his mother loves him?" No mother should have to know such pain.

So today I ask every mother's child to send another card this Mother's Day. Address it to your Senator or Representative in Congress. Tell them this health care reform plan is important, because it may help the most important person in your life. And tell them along with mother love, most of our mothers taught us that the most important thing in life was to be a good person and do the right thing.

Well, this Mother's Day, the right thing is to make sure that by next Mother's Day we never have to worry about the health of our mothers being cared for.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:06 p.m. on May 6 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 7.

Remarks Announcing the Appointment of William H. Gray III as Special Adviser on Haiti and an Exchange With Reporters *May 8, 1994*

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I want to speak for a few moments about the crisis in Haiti, the challenge it poses to our national interests, and the new steps I am taking to respond.

Three and a half years ago, in free and fair elections, the people of Haiti chose Jean-Bertrand Aristide as their President. Just 9 months later, their hopes were dashed when Haiti's military leaders overthrew democracy by force. Since then, the military has murdered innocent civilians, crushed political freedom, and plundered Haiti's economy.

From the start of this administration, my goal has been to restore democracy and President Aristide. Last year, we helped the parties to negotiate the Governors Island accord, a fair and balanced agreement which laid out a road map for a peaceful resolution to the crisis. But late last year, the Haitian military abrogated the agreement, and since then they have rejected every effort to achieve a political settlement.

At the same time, the repression and bloodshed in Haiti have reached alarming new proportions. Supporters of President Aristide, and

many other Haitians, are being killed and mutilated. This is why 6 weeks ago I ordered a review of our policy toward Haiti. As a result of this review, we are taking several steps to increase pressure on Haiti's military while addressing the suffering caused by their brutal misrule. We are stepping up our diplomatic efforts, we are intensifying sanctions, and we are adapting our migration policy.

Let me describe these steps. First, to bring new vigor to our diplomacy, I am pleased to announce that Bill Gray, president of the United Negro College Fund, former House majority whip, and chair of the House Budget Committee, has accepted my invitation to serve as special adviser to me and to the Secretary of State on Haiti. Bill is here with his wife, on his way to the inauguration of President Mandela in South Africa, and I will ask him to speak in just a few moments. But let me just say that he is a man of vision and determination, of real strength and real creativity. And I appreciate his willingness to accept this difficult and